

REMARKS

Claims 1-13 have been presented for examination in the above-identified U.S. Patent Application.

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Claims 1-13 have been rejected in Office Action dated April 21, 2004.

Claims 1-13 have been amended by this Amendment A.

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Claim 14 has been added by this Amendment A.

Claims 1-14 are in the Application and reconsideration of the Application is hereby respectfully requested.

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Referring to Page 2 of the Office Action, Claims 1-13 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent 5,746,656 issued in the name of Bezick et al.

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Prior to discussing the rejection itself, the present invention will be summarized. The present invention describes a game situation in which the players participate in a common game. The example of bridge will be used to clarify the invention. The apparatus involves a game hub which would typically execute the program comprising the game. Each user has available a game controller, each game controller being coupled to the game hub. The game

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controller includes input apparatus permitting the associated user to interact with game program. In addition, each game controller has a display unit, the actual display of the display unit being available only to the user associated with the game controller. For example, during a bridge game, the number of "tricks" won by each set of partners is displayed for all players/users on the hub display unit. Similarly, the cards of the "dummy", after completion of the bidding, are displayed on the game hub and/or on the game controller display units for all users. However, the "hand" (cards) held by each user is available on the display unit of the game controller associated with the user. Thus, the game hub display unit displays the status of the game for all users, while the game controller display unit provides the information needed for each user to make a decision for communication by the user of the game controller to the game hub for incorporation into the game program. More specifically, the invention discloses and claims, in the independent Claims 1, 5, and 9 of the Application, bilateral communication between the game controller and the game hub. This bilateral communication permits the user to interact with the game program through the game controller, and permits the user to receive information from the game hub with respect to the current status of the game program. In this manner, a user can make informed decisions with respect to how to proceed.

Referring now to the Bezick reference, Applicant's attorney believes that a careful reading indicates that a different game situation is envisioned from that addressed in the Application. In the Bezick reference, each user is playing a version of the game. The Bezick reference describes, as an example, an arcade terminal. At each terminal, a player/user interacts with the program to execute the game. At the end of the game, the final score of the user/player is identified and this data is transmitted to the analog of the present invention's game hub. What is displayed on the game hub's display unit are the results of a plurality of game results from the same or from different users. Applicant's attorney believes that a careful reading of the sections of the Bezick Specification cited by Examiner will confirm this understanding of the invention. Similarly, Applicant's attorney is unable find any indication of bi-lateral communication between the terminals and the analog of the game hub in the Bezick reference. As indicated above, the communication appears to be only from the terminal to the analog of the game hub. Consequently, the present Application describes a different game situation than is found in the Bezick reference. In addition, the present invention discloses and claims features, e.g., the bi-lateral transmission of signals, that is not found in the reference. Not only is a rejection under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) not appropriate, but a rejection under the pertinent section 35 U.S.C. 103 inappropriate.

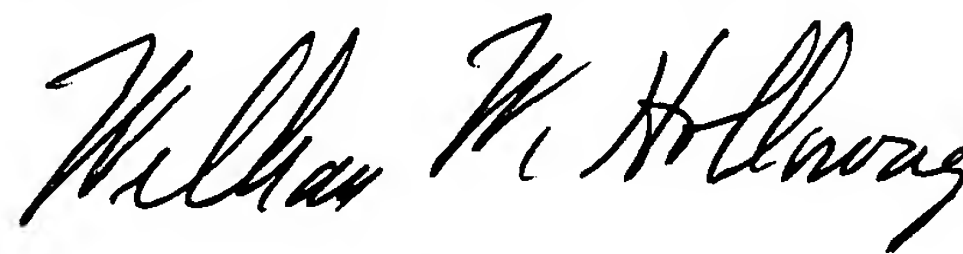
Therefore rejection of Claims 1-14 as being anticipated under 35 U.S.C. 102(b), or as being unpatentable under 35 U.S.C. 103, over Bezick, is respectfully traversed.

CONCLUSIONS

In view of the foregoing discussion and the foregoing amendments, it is believed that Claims 1-14 are now in condition for allowance of and allowance of Claims 1-13 is respectfully requested. Applicant hereby respectfully requests a timely Notice of Allowance be issued for this Application.

Should any issues remain that could be resolved by a telephonic interview, Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned attorney.

Respectfully submitted,



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